

WE SHARE THE STARS – STAR PARTY ACROSS THE DISTANCE

Best for all ages—in the same hemisphere (northern or southern)

Feeling far away from friends and other loved ones? Remember, the stars are for all of us, every night. Have a star party by phone or app with as many friends as you like.



What you need:

- A relatively open place without close lighting or obstructions, like a backyard or public space well away from lighting and big trees.
- Either a headlamp with a red light setting and a printed star map of tonight's sky from [Skymaps.com](https://www.skymaps.com) OR a stargazing app with a night vision mode (SkySafari is a great one, click "Night" to turn all text and graphics red). Avoid using an app without night vision mode on, or using a bright white flashlight or headlamp during stargazing. Bright screens or lights will prevent your eyes from adjusting to the dark, and you won't see the stars well. A comfortable patio chair, a fuzzy blanket, a warm hat, and a nice cup of something comforting.
- A bunch of other humans already in your household or on the phone to "ooh" and "aah" with you as the cosmos unfolds before your eyes.

Steps:

1. Look at your star map to see what you can expect to find tonight. If you like, research the story of the [constellations you might see](#).
2. Wait until the skies are clear and then head outside with your phone and gear. Find the cardinal directions (north, south, east, west). Once you're oriented, conference call the other participants on speakerphone, FaceTime, or your preferred technology. Darken, turn off, or hide the screen so it doesn't spoil your night vision.
3. Start looking at your star maps together, and find the dazzling constellations, planets, star clusters, and other treats that have been patiently waiting for you and yours to look up!
4. If you enjoyed it, plan your next star party and do research so you can find and share more heavenly objects and cosmic info. For more general information, peruse the science writer and astronomy popularizer Ian Ridpath's [Star Tales website](#). Consider getting [a book](#) to bring your star gazing to life all year long.

What have we learned?

- ✓ The stars are constants, friends we can rely on to be there, slowly appearing to move across our sky as the seasons progress.
- ✓ They form patterns that you can easily find by following a map and finding the four directions, just as we use maps to find things here on Earth.
- ✓ The vast and mysterious heavens have stories to tell that we can share with our loved ones, both near and far, just as the ancients did for thousands of years.